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Leadership Competency Series

EI Series...Art of Influencing and Managing People

Feeling and regulating emotions of self is private victory and sensing and managing emotions of others is a public victory. Managing relationship is about understanding others with care and friendliness coupled with purpose of moving people in the desired direction, says M R Chandramowly.

AN old Japanese tale goes: Once a belligerent samurai, challenged a Zen master to explain the concept of heaven and hell. But the monk replied with scorn. “You are nothing but a lout - I can't waste my time with the like of you! His very honour attacked, the samurai flew into a rage and pulling his sword from its scabbard, yelled “I could kill you for your impertinence.” “That”, the monk calmly replied, “is hell”. Startled at seeing the truth in what the master pointed out about the fury that had him in its grip, the samurai calmed down, sheathed his sword, and bowed, thanking the monk for the insight. “And that” said the monk, “is heaven”.

The effects of what we do can be marvellous or malicious. The root cause is ‘our thought’ and ‘feeling’. Emotional intelligence is like a smoke alarm. We are not good at predicting the time at when a particular emotion will arise. But it tells us something is arising.

If this feeling is sensed and regulated at an individual level, it is self-management. Leaders do more than this. Besides managing self, they are sensible to feelings, understand the framework of others, and influence to regulate their emotions for a bigger objective. Managing relationships is a people competency. What do we observe in people savvy leaders? Their sincere care and friendliness coupled with a purpose of mutual benefit. They understand and channel their emotions in useful ways, motivate themselves and exhibit empathy toward other’s feelings. A people proficient leader can count on a wide circle of colleagues during difficult times. He uses the ability to find “common ground” among dissimilar views. Their behavioural indicators are grouped as people competencies, which enhance team effectiveness and achieve change initiative objectives.

Successful leaders consider the value of taking time for self-awareness. They recognise body cues of others and interpret the emotions accurately. They are resilient to stay open for unpleasant as well as pleasant emotions. The inability to notice our true feeling leaves us at their mercy. When self-awareness is poor, in the state of alexithymia, people have difficulty in distinguishing emotion varieties. Such people are likely to be overly concerned about physical symptoms. People with greater certainty about their feelings are better pilots of their lives and have a surer sense about the feeling about persona decisions. Interestingly, there are gender differences here. Females experience a greater range of intensity in emotions. Men are more willing to compromise social connectedness for

independence and women care for greater need to connectedness. Women are better at reading emotions and developing social strategies than men.

Feeling and regulating emotions of self is a private victory and sensing and managing emotions of others is a public victory. Social relationship in managing emotions of others is most subtle and complex ability. People watch how good you are attuned to their emotions before turning on to you. They look out for display of behaviours that promote comfort caring and rapport. People who excel in building relationships display competencies to be an effective friend, negotiator and leader. They prove to be capable of guiding an interaction, inspiring others, making others comfortable in social situations, by influencing and persuading others. Participants in emotional intelligence workshops observed these key nine strategies

(1) Taking the time for mindfulness.

(2) Recognising and naming emotions.

(3) Understanding the causes of feelings.

(4) Differentiating between emotions and the need to take action.

(5) Preventing depression through “learned optimism”.

(6) Managing anger through learned behaviour or distraction technics.

(7) Listening for the lessons of feeling.

(8) Using “gut feelings” in decision making.

(9) Developing listening skills.

These can serve as instruments to measure emotional intelligence as well.

Research has showed us that over 50 per cent of work satisfaction is determined by the relationship an employee has with his/her boss. Some of the critical competencies to achieve people excellence through building relationship are: Assertive communication, creating comfort, empathy, service demeanour and genuine interest in developing others.

Assertive communication

It is the ability to clearly and honestly communicate personal thoughts and feeling to another person in a comfortable, direct, appropriate and straightforward manner. Assertive communication is a very positive way of talking to people and expressing thoughts and feelings in a way that promotes understanding, caring and respect. Assertive communication allows a person to respect individual rights and the rights of others and is not hurtful to self or others. Assertion enables a person to communicate effectively even in

difficult situations involving strong and intense emotions. Assertion is a key emotional skill essential for developing and maintaining strong, positive and healthy relationship.

Creating Comfort

Comfort is the ability to judge appropriate social, emotional and physical distance in verbal and non-verbal interactions with others and to impact and influence others in positive ways. Interpersonal comfort includes ability to establish rapport and develop trust in relationships by using effective attending skills and being honest, self-assured, and open. Comfort enables a person to be confident, spontaneous, and relaxed with others in a variety of situations. Comfort is s key emotional skill essential for developing and maintaining positive interactions with others in leadership capacities.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to accurately understand and constructively respond to the expressed feelings, thoughts, behaviours and other needs of others. Accurate Empathy involves active listening in a patient, compassionate and non-judgmental manner and communicating back to the persons the feelings of being heard, understood, and accepted as a person. Empathy enables a person to be viewed as caring, genuine, and trustworthy. Empathy is a key emotional skill essential for honest and effective communication in leadership capacities. Leaders with empathy competencies are attentive to emotional cues and listen well, show sensitivity and understand other's perspective and help out based on understanding other people's needs and feeling.

Service demeanour

Service demeanour is about anticipating, recognising, and meeting customers' needs. People of service demeanour understand customers' needs and match them to services or products. They seek ways to increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty. They gladly offer appropriate assistance and grasp a customer's perspective, acting as a trusted advisor.

Developing others

People with this competency, sense what others need in order to develop and bolster their abilities. They acknowledge and reward people's strengths, accomplishments and development. The identify people's developmental needs and offer useful feedback.

Relationship harmony

Awareness and action are the two key drivers for private and public victory. Competencies like self-confidence and self-assessment brings up awareness of self. Understanding others, leveraging diversity or service orientation enhances social awareness. Action that flows out from self-assessment is self-management. Competencies like trustworthiness, adaptability, and self-control support us to manage self. Learning and using competencies

such as influence, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds or team capabilities will boost up social skills.

Leaders alone cannot achieve any thing without people. Regulating emotions of self is a prerequisite to control the emotions of the people around us. To inspire and influence people for a reasonably longer period, a leader must have a positive impact on others. Positive impact cannot be made without sensing and feeling to understand the framework and position of people. If one can read emotional cues and is adept at social interactions, they can build rapport. Building rapport is the first step in influencing people.

“Mankind is one. But one is not like the other. Body and organs are same but forms and natures are different. Every one is distinct in mental makeup and this is an arrangement of many in one. It is a precision art of balancing to see equality in inequality; intimacy in enmity; thread of harmony in incoherent things and to finally derive happiness for one and all.” (Ramblings of DVG).

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